

*Amendments to the Claims*

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1. (Previously Amended) A substantially purified nucleic acid molecule that encodes a maize protein or fragment thereof comprising a nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

8. (Previously Added) A substantially purified nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

9. (Previously Added) The substantially purified nucleic acid molecule according to claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid molecule consists of a nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

10. (Previously Added) A substantially purified first nucleic acid molecule comprising a fragment from about 50 to about 100 nucleotide residues, wherein said fragment exhibits complete complementarity to a second nucleic acid molecule having a nucleic acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1 and a complement thereof.

11. (Previously Added) The substantially purified first nucleic acid molecule according to claim 10, where said first nucleic acid molecule consists of said fragment.

12. (Previously Added) The substantially purified first nucleic acid molecule according to claim 10, wherein said substantially purified nucleic acid molecule further comprises a region having a single nucleotide polymorphism.

13. (Previously Added) A substantially purified nucleic acid molecule comprising a fragment nucleic acid molecule, wherein said fragment consists of about 50 to about 100 nucleotide residues of the nucleic acid molecule of SEQ ID NO: 1.